products. The irradiation technique provides the following distinct advantages:

* Extension of shelf life of food products by killing micro-organisms causing spoilage.
* Enhancement of safety by killing food borne pathogens and parasites.
* Inhibiting sprouting in tubers, bulbs and rhizomes.
* Delaying ripening of fruits.
* Destroying insect pests in stored product and fruits.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) The Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) encourages private entrepreneurs to set up such plants. MoUs have already been signed with a few companies and Farmers' Co-operative Societies for setting up of such plants. One such company, *viz.* M/s Gamma Weld Inspection Services, Hyderabad has shown interest in setting up a facility at Hyderabad for processing of food and medical products.

Waiting list of telephone connections in Karnataka

411. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of people in the waiting list for telephone connections in Karnataka as on June, 2003, district-wise; and

(b) by when these people are likely to be provided with telephone connections?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) The total number of people in the waiting list for telephone connections in Karnataka as on June 2003 is 109603; district-wise details of waiting list is given in the Statement *{See* below).

(b) The waiting list is planned to be cleared progressively during 2003-04 subject to timely availability of underground cable/WLL equipments and feasibility.

Statement

District-wise waiting list in Karnataka as on 30.06.2003

SI.No.	District	Waiting List
1.	Bangalore Rural	7994
2.	Bangalore Urban	4655
3.	Belgaum	8977
4.	Bellary	260
5.	Bidar	1344
6.	Bijapur	3665
7.	Bagalkot	1997
8.	Chikmagalur	2321
9.	Chamrajanagar	1342
10.	Chitradurga	1999
11.	Dakshina Kannada	17600
12.	Davanagere	1074
13.	Dharwar	1555
14.	Gadag	1412
15.	Gulbarga	3093
16.	Hassan	3933
17.	Haveri	2502
18.	Kodagu	3366
19.	Kolar	4.54
20.	Koppal	975
21.	Mandya	8567
22.	Mysore	2508
23.	Raichur	2496
24.	Shimoga	7173
25.	Tumkur	4701
26.	Udupi	7844
27.	Uttara Kannada	1296
	TOTAL :	109603